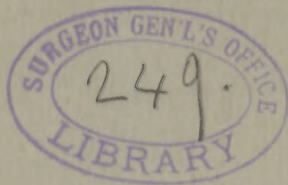


Burchard (J. H.)

FREDERICK D. LENTE,

A. M., M. D.





A MEMORIAL OF  
FREDERICK D. LENTE, A. M., M. D.\*

By T. HERRING BURCHARD, A. M., M. D.,  
NEW YORK.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF THE ACADEMY: So rapidly fly the hours that it is well to pause occasionally amid our haste and labors to note the changes that they bring.

This very evening a paper was to have been presented before this Academy by our esteemed associate, Dr. Frederick D. Lente.

It is my painful duty to announce that the appointment will not be kept. Again the remorseless scythe has been at work, and under the shadows of the Highlands, amid the scenes of busy and eventful years, our honored friend is sleeping the immortal sleep.

\* Read before the New York Academy of Medicine, November 1, 1888.



In many particulars Dr. Lente's professional career was anomalous, as his character was remarkable.

What our specific duty is, in the equation of life, must, from the very nature of things, ever remain a varying quantity. Our estimate of our personal duty, however, depends largely, if not chiefly, upon our personal capabilities of estimating the specific work required of us. Working simply for the work's sake—to kill time—however laudable the work may be, is not our idea of the highest devotion to duty. Our highest idea of duty is the highest *conception* of duty of which one's mind is capable.

He who has always lived in the valleys and has never trod the mountain-tops can have but a meager appreciation of unfolding panoramas of sleeping lakes and nestling villages, and the broadening far-off prospect beyond the hills. As he ascends, though, from one altitude to another, and his vision takes in a wider survey, his conceptions of "the far off, unattained, and dim" become changed, and vague surmises now give place to actual knowledge. But, as we ascend, the horizon recedes; "hills peep o'er hills, and Alps o'er Alps arise," and so to those choice minds of highest attainment are given broader vistas and wider fields for the employment of noble and generous deeds. And ever, as these adventurous climbers ascend, their eyes are gladdened and their hearts are cheered with loftier aspirations,

Humanity rolls, like a mighty ocean, at their feet, and, though cold its waters and unfathomable its mysteries, they press higher and higher to fire the beacon lights.

Dr. Lente, modest, unpretentious, gentle as he was, stood on the very mountain-top, and from his exalted observation took in a broad conception of life, with all its incidental duties and obligations. Extreme *conscientiousness* might well be predicated of him as his predominant characteristic. Never have I met the man whose regard for truth was so immutable. The keenest justice, even in most trivial matters, governed in all his dealings. Honor was dearer to him than life. His professional obligations to his patients, his sense of professional responsibility, he regarded as but second to his accountability to his God. Sensitive of the rights of others, as he was of his own integrity, neither intimidation nor reward could swerve him from his own high sense of right.

Slander and vituperation, ever venomous, ever foul, sink infinitely beneath contempt when incited by professional jealousy, bigotry, and pique. The vicious intolerance breathed against Dr. Lente at Saratoga, while it failed to seriously annoy him, did awaken his profound mortification that in his profession such narrow-mindedness and illiberality could be found.

Life with Dr. Lente meant work; to him it was full of



achievable possibilities. Indefatigable as a student, retiring late and rising early, he turned to profit the midnight hours. Mere physical fatigue was no excuse with him for mental inactivity. So, when his tired limbs refused to carry him, often have I found him, late at night or in the early morning, bolstered in his bed, surrounded with his books and periodicals.

All that he did was done with rare thoroughness. Disdaining ostentatious display, and deprecating superficiality, the purpose of his studies was to make himself the master of his subject. Access to his thoughts meant more than mere intellectual acquaintance. His mind was a living thesaurus of information, facts, and theories, gathered with great discrimination from the widest domains of science and the arts. And yet, student as he was, his studies never led him into devious and idle speculation. He was extremely practical in all he did. Physically delicate, but with powers of endurance that were phenomenal, with an energy that was untiring and a devotion to duty that was sublime, he brought to the practice of his profession a mind of richest and most varied acquisitions, an experience that was remarkable for its variety and scope, and a heart ever mellowed with kindness and good cheer. As a diagnostician he was painstaking, thorough, and exact. Haphazard diagnosis he deplored, and no opportunity for brilliant dis-

play ever tempted him into the hasty expression of an immature opinion. As a therapist, his intimate acquaintance with drugs and his extensive studies in physiological medication made him, at once, skillful and distinguished. As a practitioner, his fertility of expedients is illustrated in numerous inventions, formulæ, and instruments in general professional use. In the widest sense of the word he was "the good physician"—skillful, devoted, self-sacrificing. Indifferent to his own infirmities, and oblivious of his personal comfort, he brought to his patient's relief a strong brain, a ripe experience, a tender heart. As a scholar, he was an active or honorary member of most of the leading societies. He was one of the founders and an early president of the American Academy of Medicine, and a frequent contributor to current popular or professional journalism. Whatever came from his pen commanded attention. His more important contributions were his papers on "The Treatment of Intermittent Fever by the Hypodermic Injection of Quinine," "The Sedative Action of Calomel in Disease," "Intra-uterine Medication," etc.

Dr. Lente was born in Newbern, N. C., in 1823. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1845. He studied medicine in the office of our distinguished *confrère*, Professor Alfred C. Post, and graduated from the Medical Department of the New York University in '49.

During the following two years he served as House Surgeon under Valentine Mott in the New York Hospital. In 1851, having been appointed Surgeon to the West Point Foundry, the Doctor removed to Cold Spring, where, in 1853, he married Mary, the accomplished daughter of William Kemble, Esq.

Mrs. Lente, one son and three daughters survive him.

Dr. Lente's professional career at Cold Spring was one of remarkable success. His reputation as consultant and surgeon reached literally from New York to Albany. So highly prized were the practical advantages of Dr. Lente's office that a popular question among New York and Bellevue Hospital men once was: "After leaving the hospital, is it Cold Spring or Europe?"

In 1870 the doctor received and accepted the appointment as professor of gynæcology in the Medical Department of the New York University and assistant surgeon to the Woman's Hospital. After a year's arduous service in the city, interrupted by numerous professional calls up the Hudson, he returned to his former home, where he continued in active practice until failing health compelled him to seek a more genial climate.

Relinquishing a lucrative practice, he betook himself to Palatka, Fla., for the winter, and to Saratoga for the summer months.



It was at the latter place, and after a season of unusual activity and fatigue, that he was taken ill with cerebro-spinal meningitis. Fortunately he was able to return to his family at Cold Spring, where, on the 11th of October, in the sixtieth year of his age, he peacefully breathed his last.

And thus ends the record of a noble man. He dignified his manhood by his consistent Christian life, and to his profession he added luster and renown. What matters it to us how soon we follow, if we meet the final issue with as pure a life and as sublime a faith as did our illustrious friend?







